

Agknowledge

March, 1995

Oat producers honor "invaluable resource"

Harvey Yoder modestly describes winning the Kirylchuk Award for an outstanding contribution to the oats industry as a "pleasant surprise".

The award is also particularly meaningful because it was unexpected adds the department veteran of 26 years. "I also appreciate and it's more meaningful because it comes from producers."

Yoder, currently crop specialist in Lac Biche, was recognized for his work in helping to set up the Oat Producers Association of Alberta (OPAA) and his dedication to both the farming community in general and oat growers in particular.

"There might not have been an OPAA without Harvey's guidance," says Stan Wiskel, current OPAA president.

For his part, Yoder says he enjoys working with farmers and producer groups, particularly as new groups get established. From the early involvement, he adds, "You back off and let them do their own growing."

Peter Kirylchuk, the award's namesake and the association's founding president, echoes Wiskel's sentiments. "Harvey has been an invaluable resource to the association."

There's some mutual admiration between Kirylchuk and Yoder who've known each other for over 20 years. Yoder says he's also honored to receive the award that bears Kirylchuk's name.



Harvey Yoder (second left) is all smiles as he receives the Kirylchuk Award from its namesake Peter Kirylchuk. From left to right are: Stan Wiskel, president of the Oat Producers Association of Alberta, Yoder, Kirylchuk and Alma Kirylchuk, his wife.

To shred or not to shred

If you've ever found yourself in a quandary about what you should or shouldn't shred, *Buried Alive* could help.

The 20-minute video will be shown March 14 at 3 p.m. and March 15 at

8:30 a.m. in boardrooms B and C of the J.G. O'Donoghue Building.

Both **Sheila Devereux**, FOIP co-ordinator, and **Marie Sawka**, record management officer, will be on hand to answer questions.

By now, each of you will have received the second edition of the ministry business plan. Like the first plan, it's full and complete and enables both industry and staff to see the direction the ministry is headed. It's also a more polished and sophisticated version of the first plan in seven fewer pages.

There are no surprises in this second edition. It follows up on our first business plan, highlights ministry progress in 1994-95, adds more detail about the coming year and extends the plan into fiscal 1997-98. However, there are no fundamental variations from what was projected a year ago. Essentially, that's because the direction set then has been accepted and respected by the industry we serve and because we have been able, for the most part, to perform as we said we would.

Details about our human resource development plan have been added. An outline of measurable results we can judge our performance by are part of the addition, together with

Deputy Minister's Column



internal key results and indicators for each of the eight goals.

Our business plan makes it clear the greatest challenges in the coming year will be to help the industry to adjust to changes expected in federal transportation policy, to design and implement a new safety net program and to identify and pursue expanding export opportunities.

In terms of budget, the ministry has reduced its planned 1995-96 spending by 28 per cent compared to 1992-93 figures. The ministry has already achieved – in fact, overachieved for the coming year – the fiscal targets set last year. From now on, the budget actually increases slightly as new expenditures from the revised safety net program kick into place.

In terms of staff reductions, the hard part is over. Although the department will reduce by 51.7 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions, the majority will be by attrition, abolishing vacant positions and eliminating unused FTEs. The number of staff actually laid off in 1995-96 is likely to be less than what you can count on one hand.

All this means some stability is returning to our department. We can all settle down to concentrate on our new mission and goals secure in the knowledge that our direction has been reviewed and confirmed, and we have the support of our clients and employers. The big changes have happened and we are now consolidating and refining.

Sounds dull, you say? Well, maybe. For my part, sometimes *dull* is nice.

C.D. Radke

Agknowledgement board

1 The mail can bring good news, ask **Janice McGregor**, rural development specialist in Morninville. Congratulations came her way for the new **Northwest Processor** newsletter. Ken Gibson, Alberta Food Processors Association president/CEO wrote: "I am confident that the newsletter and the expertise of your team of rural development specialists and agri-food consultants will provide tremendous services to emerging entrepreneurs."

1 The difference between success and almost reaching a goal can be measured by the efforts of Alberta Agriculture staff. Take the case of staff who went the extra mile to talk to an ASB or ag society in support of the provincial food tabloid project. Efforts of the following people

helped make distributing nearly 800,000 copies of the *Enjoy Eating Alberta's Best* tabloid possible: **Carmen Andrew**, rural development specialist (RDS), Stettler; **Gary Berger**, crop specialist (CS), Athabasca; **Maureen Bolen**, RDS, Strathmore; **Jay Byer**, CS, Bonnyville; **Rod Carlyon**, beef specialist (BFS), Westlock; **Myrna Christopherson**, admin support, Olds; **Andrea Church**, CS, High River; **Gail Forsyth**, admin support, Rocky Mountain House; **Shauna Gagnon**, admin support, Sangudo; **Lloyd Giebelhaus**, BFS, Sangudo; **Ron Hockridge**, CS, Wetaskiwin; **Reg Kontz**, agricultural education and community services, Edmonton; **Dale Seward**, CS, Fairview; **Trevor Schoff**, CS, Sedgewick; **Marian Williams**, RDS, Camrose;

Donna Wright, admin support, Rimbey; and, **Trevor Yurchak**, BFS, Athabasca. Staff committee members also *agknowledge* agricultural fieldmen across the province who presented this project to their boards.

1 *We do make a difference. Being "from the government" often doesn't net much thanks, but we serve anyway. The Agknowledgement Board is a way to recognize staff who have made a difference. Items can be kudos from colleagues, results from conferences, a nod of recognition or anything else that has given you or another staff member a fuller heart, lighter step or broader grin. Please submit your suggestions to the Agknowledgement editor.*

15-years

Don Baker, public lands, Drayton Valley

Brian Bonik, public lands, Barrhead

Cathi Hayduk, RAS admin support, Vegreville

Dennis Holowaychuk, public lands, Bonnyville

Harry Loonen, public lands, Wainwright

Tennis Marx, beef specialist, Camrose

Mike Melnyk, public lands, Sherwood Park

Charles Richardson, public lands, Sherwood Park

Christine Thompson, public lands, Barrhead

20-years

Laurent Belland, public lands, St. Paul



Inez Curtis, regional advisory services, Vermilion

Gerald Dube, public lands, Barrhead

Eileen Hannah, regional administrator, Barrhead

Gail Lemke, rural development specialist, Stony Plain

Brian Risdale, regional administrator, Vermilion

Dave Rous, marketing services, Edmonton

25-years

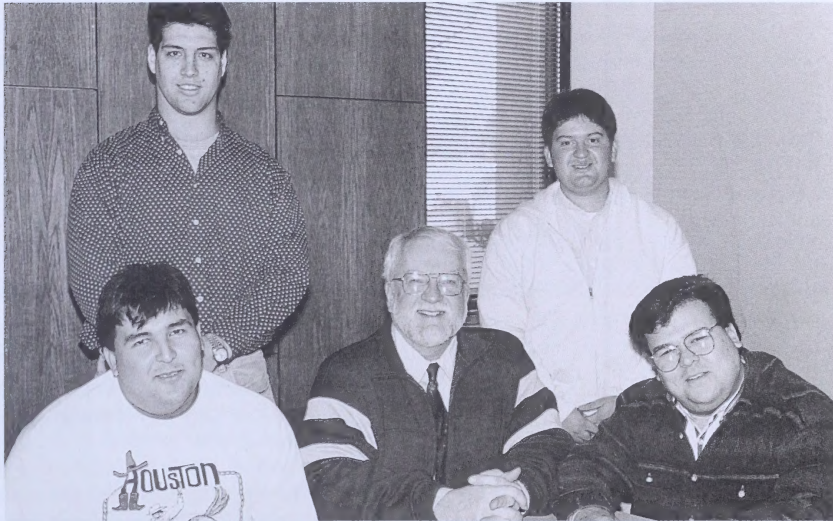
Ron Ball, public lands, St. Paul

Vic Fischer, public lands, Sherwood Park

Suzanne Krissa, public lands, St. Paul

Bill Kuly, public lands, Sherwood Park

Staff who received long-term service awards will be **acknowledged** in this column. The awards start at 15 years of service. For more information, contact **Lillian Chan** in the communications division at 427-2127 or 147-2127.



Four of the five Mexican students involved in the Canada/Mexico Green Certificate Project '95 pose with **Doug Taylor**. From left to right are: Miguel Chapa (standing), Rueben Alanis, Taylor, Carlos Morton (standing) and Victor Sagon.

Green Certificate goes Mexican

With -20°C temperatures as their Canadian greeting, four Mexican undergraduate students began their five month practical farm experience in Alberta. **Doug Taylor** of the department's **Green Certificate Program** led a day and half orientation in late February. Following that, the Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey students went to their host farms. Five students are involved in this Canada/Mexico Green Certificate Project '95. Their Green Certificate training is a hands-on supplement to their course work back home. The five are taking four different types of Green Certificate training – feedlot, field crop, cow/calf and dairy.

CPS ##S WOW

Last June when the *Farm Fuel Registry* was transferred from Alberta Treasury to **central program support** (CPS), the division gained one staff member and responsibility for 60,000 farmers.

Nancy Shickele was the person and all the farmers were on the program's registry. The first challenge was co-ordinating a renewal.

"Even by CPS standards, this renewal was a large undertaking," says **Dale Dowswell**, program administrator. "Staff in all branches made contributions as more than 100,000 client contacts were made in a six month period."

The project started in July 1994 when a renewal notice was sent to the 60,000 registration number holders. By the end of January 1995, 55,000 producers had returned their forms and 50,000 were issued new numbers.

CPS processed 75,000 pieces of outgoing and incoming mail. As many as eight telephone lines were busy for most of the summer and fall to field enquiries about program eligibility.

NO BULL

Confessions of a Plain Language trainer

by Ross Gould

There is a point to this story: When it comes to *Plain Language* we all need to watch ourselves – well most of us anyway. There may be some who are perfect but that doesn't include me, as you will soon see.

I had always been proud that I could write in Plain Language. Some people had even commented that a certain letter or green sheet was well written. This added to my self satisfaction. So it was only logical, that I was asked to join the team of Plain Language trainers.

All of the trainers took the Plain Language course in preparation for going out to train our peers. Like the rest of you who took Plain Language last year, we were asked to submit a sample of writing. Naturally, I chose a piece which I thought had very little room for improvement. Then I had to take another look at my sample in the light of what I'd learned about Plain Language during the course. My overgrown opinion of my writing was brought back to reality.

For starters, most of my sentences were *passive* rather than active. I suppose that could be excused, since we in government had been conditioned to write so that nobody can be identified as the source of an idea or action. Plain Language principles have convinced me the active voice gets the message to the reader more quickly. There is also less chance for confusion when the subject is clear.

For example: "Several Plain Language mistakes were found in the writing sample." Judge for yourself how much more information you get from the active voice in the re-write: "I found several Plain Language mistakes in my writing sample."

My other major Plain Language error was the *run on sentence*. A certain sign was the number of sentences

taking three or more lines on a typewritten page. A closer look showed me that most of these three line sentences had several ideas in them. Often the most important idea was at the end of the sentence. There its importance was lost among all of the confusion of ideas that came before.

When I looked more carefully I could easily see where two or more ideas could each have a sentence of their own. It was amazing to see how much clearer my writing sample became when I applied Plain Language principles to a rewrite.

In the past year I have found that I can never let down my guard. If I forget to check my writing for errors in Plain Language I wish later that I'd been more careful. Especially, when I find long and confusing sentences or slip back to using the passive voice.

So you see, for me, pride before a fall was an important part of my own Plain Language training. I suspect it may be for many of you as well. Don't let the fact that you have learned about Plain Language lull you into thinking that you can always get it right the first time. **A Plain Language check is as important as a spell check.**

Besides being a dedicated plain language trainer and member of the departments plain language co-ordinating committee, Ross Gould is head of animal industry's beef and dairy group.

Social notes

- The Aggie Rockpile runs March 18 at the Shamrock Curling Club starting at 12:30 p.m.
- Mark June 3 on your calendar. The Camrose Golf Club is the place for the department's golf tourney. Stay tuned for more details.
- Slowpitch season swings into being on May 9. The league uses diamonds at the Alberta School for the Deaf. \$150 registration fee per team. For more information, contact **Lincoln Rooney** at 427-2151.
- On a high financial note, the Christmas craft and bake sale made a profit of \$513.33. Congratulations to organizer **Shirley Phillips** of marketing services. The division is taking on the sale again in '95. The date's been set for December 1.
- **Economic services** is hosting the Klondike breakfast. The **executive suite** has volunteered to host the adult Christmas party.
- Volunteer hosts/sponsors needed for: **Fall fair, Halloween, Children's Christmas Party, Atrium Christmas Party** and selling **Entertainment Books**. If you are interested in one of these events, have a new idea or a way to spruce up traditional events, contact **Ray Bassett** or **Lois Sutton-Davis** at 427-1957.
- The next **social committee meeting** is June 14 at the O.S. Longman 9th floor boardroom at 9:30 a.m.

Lace 'em up for April tourney

Our department will ice two teams at the annual *Minister's Cup Hockey Tournament* next month.

One team will be from headquarters and the other from the field. The fun tournament is scheduled for April 19 through 23 in Spruce Grove.

Headquarters co-ordinator is **Dan Bundun**. You can call him in Edmonton at 427-2151 or 147-2151.

Fred Young in Evansburg is co-ordinating the rural team. He can be reached at (403)727-3673.

Players of all skill levels are welcome. Anyone interested in playing should contact either Bundun or Young.

FOIP and You

by Sheila Devereux

Question: I often get information such as client addresses and production information from other department programs. I heard that under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, I will no longer be able to do this. Is this true and why?

Answer: Essentially, this is true. Any information the department has about a client is personal information. The act defines personal information as "any recorded information about an identifiable individual". Names, addresses, associations, age, gender, identifying symbols, health records, education, opinions about the individual and opinions held by the individual are examples of personal information.

Protection of Privacy, part 2 of the act, lays out the rules for collecting and using personal information. When personal information is collected, the client must be told how the information will be used. The information can't be used for other purposes.

In the future, when personal information is recorded, the client must be informed of and consent to any use that will be made of the information.

Existing records of addresses or other personal information can no longer be re-used for other programs, mailing lists or analyses. The new act doesn't allow information sharing or recycling and provides the public with an assurance the personal information they give to the government won't be misused.

However, a legitimate need to use the information for more than one purpose can be covered by an agreement with the client.

Sheila Devereux is co-ordinating the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIP) unit for our department. In this column she'll answer questions about FOIP. If you have a question, contact her at 427-2127 or 147-2127. Also, be on the lookout for a complete monthly newsletter about FOIP and how the new act will affect you and your job.



Above, Paszkowski (left) shakes hands with Chris Kaulbars (right) of communications.

Minister says thanks

Minister Walter Paszkowski visited headquarters early this month to express his thanks and appreciation for staff's work over the last year and a half. In that time, the department has been restructured. "We've become leaner and we're doing more with less. I appreciate that each and everyone of you has contributed to the success of the department," he says. "The success of this department is your success." Calling the portfolio dynamic, Paszkowski says department staff are moulding the future of Canada's leading agricultural province.

On the move

Welcome and congratulations to the following people who have joined the department: **Richard Anderson**, grazing reserve supervisor, Rocky Mountain House; **Tom Crowe**, brand inspector, High River; **Barbara Donadt**, research officer, marketing services division, Edmonton; **Diane Guccione**, animal health laboratories branch, Lethbridge.

Moving around in the department: **Sandy Hustins**, admin support moves from the Morinville district office to Stony Plain...**Terry Church** and **Dennis Glover** have switched directorships. Church is in the newly renamed **processing industry division**, while Glover's now at the helm of **animal industry**...**Brent Patterson** is head of the consolidated **irrigation branch** in Lethbridge. The new branch includes both the former

irrigation branch and the land evaluation and reclamation branch.

Good luck to staff leaving us: **Andrea Church**, crop specialist, High River; **Sauna Gagne**, administrative support, Sangudo; **Dean Hubbard**, soil and crop management branch, Lethbridge; **Stephanie Jackel**, accounts branch, Edmonton; **Don Lobay**, crop specialist, Camrose; **Jayne McKnight**, central program support, Edmonton; **Steven Nickoriuk**, research division, Olds.

Stay tuned for Davidson details

Two events are planned at the end of April to honor **Chris Davidson**, director of the finance and human resources division. Davidson is retiring on April 30 after 34 years of service. More details on the event will be coming soon.

Acknowledgement is published monthly for *Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development* employees. Send story ideas, pictures and letters to the editor to: Publishing Branch, J.G. O'Donoghue Building, 7000-113 Street, Edmonton, Alberta. Telephone: (403) 427-2121; RITE 147-2121; Fax (403) 427-2861. Submission deadlines are the last day of the month.

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